GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4027
ANSWERED ON:23.12.2015
Traditional Knowledge Digital Library
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to open the access of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) to researchers;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) if not, the reasons for the same and the manner in which researchers otherwise gather such information;
(d) whether TKDL has prevented foreign patent offices from filing patents infringing on our traditional knowledge; and
(e) if so, the details of the same including money spent on pursuing such actions during each of the last three years and the current year?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES

(SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY)

(a),(b)&(c) No, Madam. The 'Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)' was created with the objective to protect the country's traditional knowledge at International Patent Offices by preventing the grant of wrong patents. As per the considered decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in 2006, the access to TKDL was approved only for International Patent Offices for searching the prior art, under a Non-disclosure International Agreement, so that India's traditional knowledge is not misappropriated by securing patent(s) on traditional knowledge based products at International Patent Offices.

Contents of TKDL have been taken from only those traditional books on Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha systems of medicines, which are in printed and published form and are available for researchers in open markets at reasonable prices.

(d)&(e) Yes, Madam. TKDL consists of 2.93 lakh medicinal formulations contained in traditional literature of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha systems of medicine, in five international language i.e. English, Spanish, Japanese, German and French to make the prior art search in a justifiable manner for patent examiners of International Patent Offices. For facilitating the protection of Nation''s traditional knowledge, CSIR has entered into International Agreements with 10 Countries. Also, CSIR is continuously submitting pre-grant oppositions along with prior-art evidences from TKDL w.r.t. patent applications being filed at International Patent Offices on India''s traditional knowledge. Pursuant to this, since 2009 till date success has already been achieved in 220 cases wherein patent applications filed on Indian systems of medicines got cancelled or were withdrawn by the Applicants themselves due to evidences sent from TKDL, that too without any cost. In comparison APEDA had to spend more than Rs 7 crores in getting revoked only few claims of a single Basmati rice patent. CSIR has already submitted about 1400 pre-grant oppositions in various International Patent Offices like European Patent Office, US Patent & Trademark Office, Canadian Patent Office, Australian Patent Office etc., and similar outcome is expected in those cases also.

The funds utilized in the project in the last three years and current year(till November, 2015) amount to Rs. 1312.91 lakhs (Rs. 475.69 lakh, Rs. 405.72 lakh, Rs. 208.68 lakh and Rs. 222.82 lakh in 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 till November 2015, respectively).

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